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The President's Daily Brief

March 5, 1976

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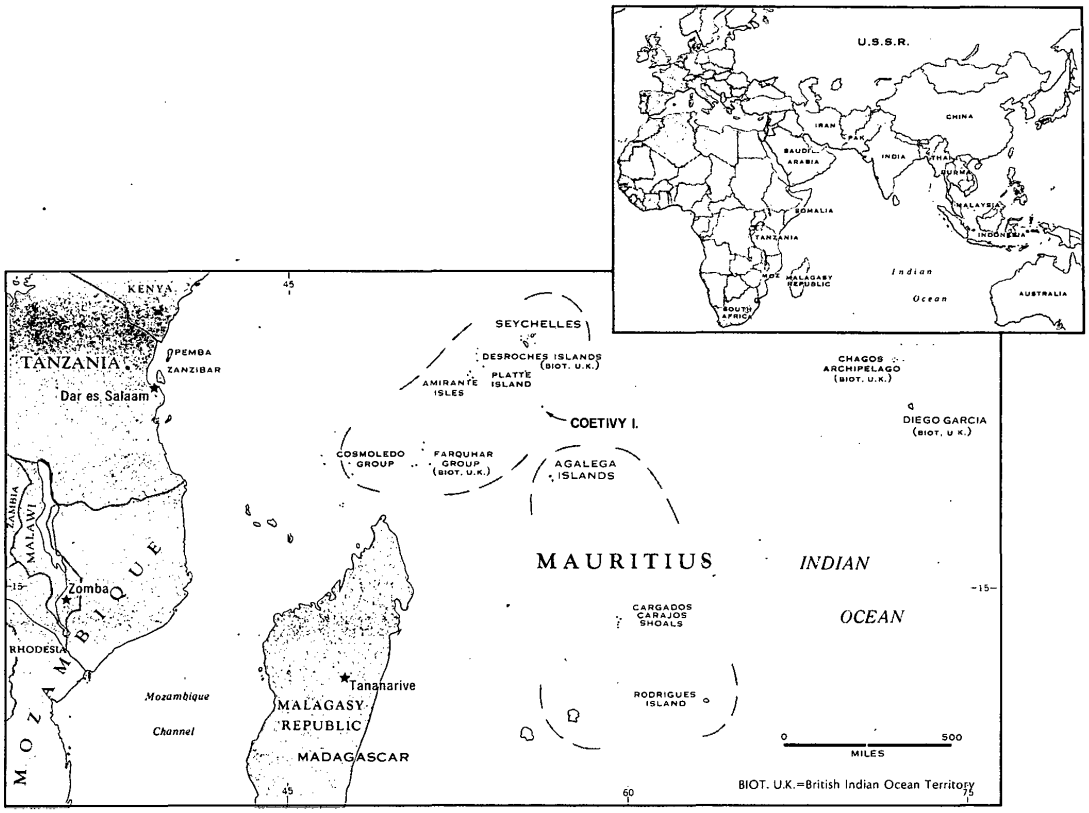

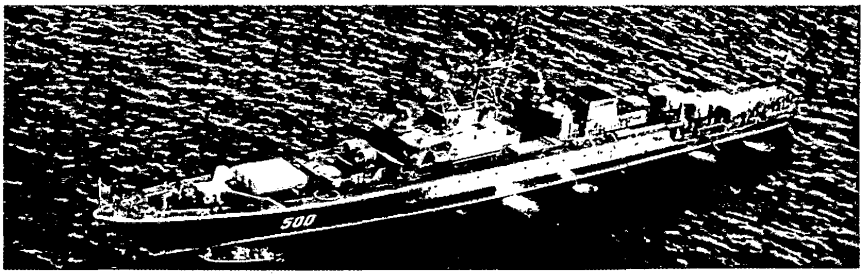

Krivak-class Guided Missile Destroyer

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USSR

The Soviets have moved four naval ships south in the Indian Ocean, possibly in reaction to the increasing tension in southeastern Africa.

A Krivak-class guided missile destroyer, an Alligator-class landing ship, and a support ship have been at an anchorage near Coetivy Island in the Seychelles since February 28, and an oiler joined the group yesterday.

During the later stages of the fighting in Angola, the Soviet navy maintained a constant patrol in neighboring waters, usually with the same combination of types of ships as are now at Coetivy Island. With some eight warships, an attack submarine, and numerous support ships in the Indian Ocean, the Soviets could quickly reinforce the contingency group. The Soviet squadron normally remains in the northwestern sector of the Indian Ocean, near support facilities in Somalia.

* * *

Soviet arms offloaded in Mozambique last month reportedly included three tanks and three or four truck-mounted 122-mm. rocket launchers.

This would be the first delivery of such equipment to Mozambique. We do not know whether the arms are destined for Rhodesian guerrillas or Mozambique forces. We also cannot substantiate reports that either the USSR or Cuba is shifting arms and materiel directly from Angola to Mozambique, nor can we confirm any arms deliveries directly from the USSR this year. Last year, seven Soviet arms carriers offloaded an estimated $12 million of equipment in Mozambique including 122-mm. rockets, anti-aircraft guns, and small arms.

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CHINA

The attacks on Teng Hsiao-ping continue to escalate, but the campaign thus far has stopped short of its final step--a call for and subsequent announcement of his ouster.

This situation suggests that Teng's removal is at least as divisive an issue as was his return from political disgrace nearly three years ago. Nevertheless, more moderate elements in the leadership have not been able to slow the attacks or mount a public defense of Teng and his policies.

Teng is the only member of the Politburo's elite Standing Committee who has not appeared in public since Chou En-lai's funeral in mid-January. No one in the leadership has appeared regularly, but the party's left wing, which is leading the attack on Teng, has monopolized the public limelight. Those leaders who are most likely to support Teng and his policies have made few or no public appearances.

Chinese officials have made conflicting statements as to whether Teng still holds his important party, government and military positions. A Chinese official responded on March 3 with a "no comment" when asked to confirm rumors that Teng had resigned. If the moderates fail to defend Teng publicly in the face of the strong leftist attack, he probably ultimately will have to give up his highest ranking positions as party vice chairman and member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Should his opposition fall short of purging him, it is probable at best Teng could hang on as an ordinary member of the Politburo. Teng's position as People's Liberation Army chief of staff is also in doubt.

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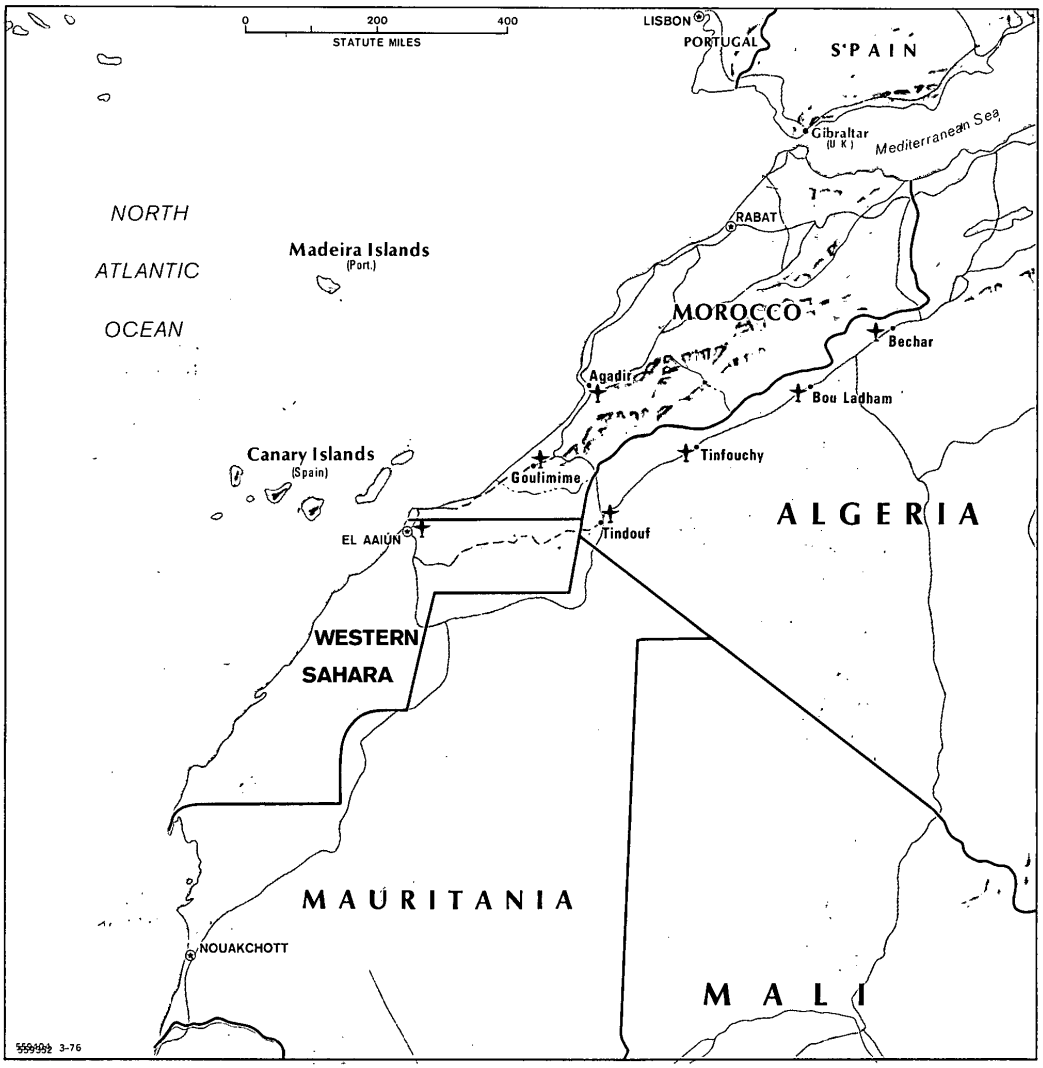

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MOROCCO-ALGERIA

Satellite photography of mid-February shows that Morocco is constructing one, possibly two, new runways at Goulimime airfield, some 100 miles west of the Algerian border in southern Morocco. The new strips will be capable of handling jet aircraft.

The improvements at this airfield will give the Moroccans a large forward base from which they can better conduct operations throughout southern Morocco and the northeastern part of Western Sahara. The Moroccans now have all 14 of their usable F-5 fighters, some 13 French-built jet trainers and light attack aircraft, plus 7 older piston driven trainer aircraft in southern Morocco and the Sahara, leaving northern Moroccan air space virtually defenseless. All of the jet aircraft are operating either out of Agadir or El Aaiun.

Algeria, since late last year , has kept at least 20 MIG-15s or MIG-17s at Bechar and Tindouf. Construction of new runways at Bou Ladham and Tindouf, as well as the building of aircraft revetments at Tinfouchy airfield in southwestern Algeria indicates that Algiers plans to improve facilities in that part of the country, should it be necessary to build up airpower there. Algiers has around 20 Soviet-built light bombers and about 190 fighters, fighter-bombers, and jet trainers based elsewhere in Algeria.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Prime Minister Vorster's bland public comments yesterday on Mozambican President Machel's announcement of a total boycott against Rhodesia seem intended to keep Pretoria's options open.

Vorster probably hopes that South Africa's capabilities for softening the impact of the boycott can be used as bargaining chips for dealing with Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith and possibly the black African leaders with whom Vorster worked last year to get Rhodesian settlement talks started.

The South African transportation network is physically capable of handling a significant portion of the Rhodesian traffic--roughly half of Rhodesia's overseas trade--that has been going through seaports in Mozambique. An emergency rerouting of Rhodesian trade, however, would involve some costly disruptions in South Africa's normal traffic patterns.

Although the Mozambican boycott makes the Rhodesian settlers more dependent than ever on South African economic support, Vorster's reinforced leverage over Smith must be exerted discreetly. The Mozambican boycott represents the application of the UN sanctions against the Smith regime that are anathema to white South Africans, and Vorster will avoid any statements that could be construed as support for international sanctions. Nevertheless, he will probably make economic aid to Rhodesia contingent, at least in part, on Smith's cooperation with Vorster's efforts to resolve the Rhodesian conflict.

Vorster no doubt fears that the insurgents, who are concentrated in Mozambique, may soon be supported by Cuban troops. An escalation of guerrilla warfare in Rhodesia would put Vorster under intense domestic political pressures to resume open military aid for Smith, a move that would cancel his efforts toward peaceful coexistence with Mozambique and other black African states.

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NOTES

Yugoslav *President Tito is preparing to resume an active schedule after nearly two months of recuperation from his latest illness.*

Over the weekend he will preside at party meetings to hear reports from the delegation to the Soviet party congress. Tito also is expected to see Cuban Prime Minister Castro, who will spend the weekend in Belgrade. The Yugoslav leadership is completing preparations for Tito's Latin American tour, which is expected to begin Wednesday. On the return leg of his trip, Tito may stop in the Azores for talks with Portuguese President Costa Gomes.

* * *

Greece *and* Turkey *apparently have reached a compromise agreement on the proposed Turkish military exercise in the Aegean on March 9-10, thereby defusing a situation that could have raised tensions and led to an incident.*

According to senior Greek Foreign Ministry officials, the agreement will permit the Turkish exercise west of the Greek island of Lesbos to take place while ensuring, at the same time, that air and sea traffic to and from the island will not be interrupted.

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